

'Tis the Season of food, Not a Reason to Fret

If you're gearing up to starve yourself so you can enjoy all your Thanksgiving favorites, it's not necessary or a good idea. Thanksgiving comes around once a year and for many people the food is the most important part of the tradition. It's okay to enjoy yourself and splurge a little. But there are several things you can do to balance things out and avoid overdoing it.

Party "Tid-Bites"

Any foods, especially traditional holiday treats, can fit into a healthful eating plan. The secret is to be sensible and flexible with your choices. Whether you're eating at grandma's house or a restaurant, these party tips can help keep you on track:

- I. **Be realistic.** Deciding to lose weight over the holidays may be a losing game. Strive to maintain your weight instead.
- II. **Balance what you eat with other meals throughout the day.** If Thanksgiving dinner is scheduled for 5:00 p.m., eat a small, lower-calorie breakfast and lunch so you can enjoy your favorites without overdoing it.
- III. **Don't deprive yourself of your favorites.** Make it a balancing act. Perhaps skip the salad with dressing-you can have one any day of the year-and go for that homemade stuffing. Or, balance your favorites with low-calorie foods, such as vegetables with a small amount of dip or boiled shrimp with lemon.
- IV. **Watch the portion sizes.** If you have two dinners to attend, go for small portions so you have room for the second meal. And, if it's a buffet, be selective. Choose only the foods you really want and keep the portions small.
- V. **Don't forget dessert.** So many pies to choose from-pumpkin, apple, cherry. If you choose to go a la mode, use low-fat frozen yogurt or reduced fat ice cream instead of regular ice cream. Try low-fat whipped cream or whipped evaporated skim milk as a topping. Or, just enjoy **one** slice.

Get Portion Savvy

"Watch your portion sizes!" But, what's the right portion? It's important to keep tabs on portion size-because it's the portion, or serving size that determines the number of calories. Even low-fat foods can add up to a hefty calorie count when portions get big.

A good planning guide is the Food Guide Pyramid with its five food groups. But, you still need to know what counts as one serving. A slightly bigger portion may

count as more than one serving and a small portion, as just a partial serving. Judging a serving size takes practice and many times we underestimate.

Get Moving

Physical activity is vital to health and fitness all year long. The crisp days of autumn make Thanksgiving the perfect time to take a brisk walk with family and friends. Schedule a walk for after dinner or during half-time from your football game.

Have Fun!

Thanksgiving is only once a year and if you want to enjoy your favorites you can. Enjoying a traditional holiday meal or party foods with family and friends doesn't need to destroy healthful food habits you've nurtured all year long.

Linda Bowman is Family and Consumer Sciences Agent for the Santa Rosa County Extension Service. She may be reached at (850)623-3868 or E-mail her at

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